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ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT: OTHER HUMAN RESOURCES QUESTIONS

Improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 48/106 of 20 December 1993 on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat. Recalling previous resolutions and decisions and in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Assembly urged the Secretary-General to accord greater priority to the recruitment and promotion of women in posts subject to geographical distribution. In achieving the targets of 35 per cent in posts subject to geographical distribution and 25 per cent representation of women for posts at the D-1 level and above by 1995, set in resolutions 45/125 of 14 December 1990, 45/239 C of 21 December 1990, 46/100 of 16 December 1991 and 47/93 of 16 December 1992, particular attention was to be focused on senior policy-level and decision-making posts and on those areas of the Secretariat where the levels of representation were below average. In the resolution the Assembly also called for an increase in the representation levels of women from developing countries, particularly those which are unrepresented or underrepresented, including countries in transition.

2. To further the Secretary-General's efforts in this regard, the General Assembly, in resolution 48/106, called for a strengthening, from within existing resources, of the Focal Point for Women in the Secretariat "... to ensure authority of enforcement and responsibility of accountability and to enable it more effectively to monitor and facilitate progress in the 1995 action programme".

3. By resolution 48/106 and also resolution 48/108 of 20 December 1993 on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, the General Assembly encouraged the support and active participation of Member States in improving the status of women in the Secretariat, through such measures as: identifying and submitting more women candidates, encouraging women to apply for vacant posts, creating national rosters, and sharing information with the Secretariat.

4. The past year has been marked by vigorous efforts by the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) to integrate the goals and targets for the improvement of the status of women into the overall strategy for the management of the Organization's human resources set out in document A/C.5/49/5. It is the view of the Secretary-General that the adoption of a pro-active, more people-centred human resources strategy built on the principles of the Charter will enhance the ability of the Secretariat to recruit and retain personnel of the highest calibre and integrity, and, within this context, serve as the most conducive means of enhancing the status of women. It is anticipated that strengthened planning capacity and career development, along with better conditions of service, will make it possible to attract and retain more women and enable the Secretariat to achieve the goals set by the General Assembly.

5. The present report is divided into three sections. Section II offers an account of the current status of women in the Secretariat in posts subject to geographical distribution, as at 30 June 1994. In keeping with the Secretary-General's view that the efforts to improve the status of women must include women in all categories, this section also reports on the representation of

women in posts with special language requirements and in the General Service and related categories. Section III provides an analysis of the constraints confronted by women and sheds light on actions that have been taken to improve the status of women. Section IV sets out the strategic plan of action for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat based on the 1991-1995 Action Programme. It translates the Secretary-General's pro-active policy for attainment of gender balance into tangible and measurable objectives, targets and measures; and an implementation plan which takes into account the existing attitudinal, administrative and managerial constraints. It also addresses the issues and concerns of women in other categories and reaffirms the Secretary-General's conviction that full gender parity must be achieved by the year 2000.

II. CURRENT SITUATION

A. Women in posts subject to geographical distribution

6. As shown in table 1, steady progress has been achieved since 30 June 1993, when the overall percentage of women in posts subject to geographical distribution was 31.3 per cent. By 30 June 1994, the percentage had risen to 32.6 per cent, representing a 1.3 percentage point increase. The percentage of women at levels D-1 and above, which was 12.3 per cent at 30 June 1993, rose to 15.1 per cent by 30 June 1994. Representation at the D-1 and D-2 levels increased from 12.8 and 13.6 in 1993 to 14.7 and 18.7, respectively, in 1994. It is significant that these increases were achieved at a time when the Organization was undergoing restructuring, a freeze on recruitment was in place until April of 1994, and a new system for placement and promotion was introduced.

7. In spite of the steady progress, the overall picture of representation at senior levels is below target. However, women at D-2 and D-1 levels increased by eight posts compared to 1993 figures. In addition, the welcome trend towards increased numbers of women at the P-5 levels has continued by the addition of 19 women, helping to form the critical mass at mid-level needed for the promotion of women staff members to the D-1 level and above. The slower progress in increasing the representation of women at the D-1 level and above is in some part due to the lack of seniority in grade of women promoted to the P-5 level in years before. Among other strategies, it will thus be important to identify qualified women with accumulated seniority, or, as appropriate, to invoke the mechanism of accelerated promotion for particularly deserving candidates. A strategy being utilized to prepare women for assumption of higher level managerial and supervisory posts is temporary assignment of women to higher level vacant posts and/or assigning them to duties of officer-in-charge.

8. A study undertaken by the Steering Committee for Improvement of the Status of Women in 1994 in Departments and Offices indicates that out of 26 surveyed, 10 have attained the overall 35 per cent target and five have reached the 25 per cent target and five have reached the 25 per cent target at the D-1 level and above, but the rest have fallen below expectations. Statistics thus bear out the Secretary-General's conclusion that the pace of progress must be accelerated and such measures as those set out in the strategic plan of action should be adopted if decisive action is to be taken to meet the targets.

Table 1. Number and percentage of staff in posts subject to geographical distribution

Level	30 June 1993				30 June 1994			
	Women	Men	Total	%	Women	Men	Total	%
USG	3	18	21	14.3	2	17	19	10.5
ASG	1	14	15	6.7	2	16	18	12.5
D-2	9	57	66	13.6	14	61	75	18.7
D-1	31	211	242	12.8	34	198	232	14.7
P-5	103	372	475	21.7	122	375	497	24.5
P-4	203	463	666	30.5	246	481	727	33.8
P-3	239	396	635	37.7	240	371	611	39.2
P-2	209	237	446	46.9	168	201	369	45.5
P-1	6	1	7	60.0	2	0	2	100.0
Total	804	1 769	2 573	31.3	830	1 720	2 550	32.6

Source: Reports of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/48/559 and A/49/527).

9. As one means of reinforcing the application of measures to increase the representation of women at decision-making levels, the Secretary-General established in late 1993 a Senior Review Group for the filling of posts at the Director (D-2) and higher levels, levels which hitherto were not systematically subjected to such recruitment and promotion processes.

10. As indicated in table D1 in the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/49/527), representation of women in posts subject to geographical distribution as a percentage of all staff in 1994 continued to show imbalances among regions and countries of origin. Eastern Europe (0.75), the Middle East (1.25) and Africa (2.94) registered the lowest representation among the regions. The highest percentages were registered by North America and the Caribbean (9.53), Western Europe (8.00) and Asia and the Pacific (6.78). It should be noted that the percentage for the Asia-Pacific region is based on representation mainly by Asia; the Pacific area is underrepresented. The regional imbalance is also reflected in the percentage of women staff grouped by region of origin as of 30 June 1994 (A/49/527, table D2).

Eastern Europe (2.29), the Middle East (3.86), Africa (9.04) and Latin America (9.52) have the lowest representation of women in a range from 2.29 per cent for Eastern Europe to 29.28 per cent for North America and the Caribbean.

11. Of the Member States within range or overrepresented, women account for approximately one third of the representation. Figures vary widely among countries, and more women are represented at the lower levels, P-1 to P-4 posts.

B. Women in posts subject to special language requirements

12. As shown in table 2, a comparative analysis of the status of women in posts with special language requirements covering the period 1975 through 1994 reveals a 4.9 per cent increase in the representation level of women, from 30.5 per cent in 1975 to 35.4 per cent in 1994. Further statistical analysis reveals that, however welcome this increase, the patterns of regional representation noted in respect of posts subject to geographical distribution prevail in this traditionally gender-blind category of Professional staff. There is every reason to believe that the active support of Member States in these regions in proposing women candidates to sit for a competitive language examinations will yield significant results in improving the status of women in posts with special language requirements.

Table 2. Percentage of women in posts with special language requirements 1975, 1980, 1985 and 1994 a/
(as at June of each year)

Levels	1975		1980		1985		1994	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
P-5	33	11	41	15	108	39	95	36
P-4	145	49	169	83	226	122	211	130
P-3	227	126	279	150	218	113	230	120
P-2	111	39	89	43	130	53	20	19
P-1	4	3	0	2	0	0	0	0
Total	520	228	578	293	683	327	556	305
Grand total	748		871		1 010		861	
Female %	30.5		33.6		32.4		35.4	

Source: Reports of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat: A/10184, A/35/528, A/40/652, A/48/559 and A/49/527.

a/ It should be noted that posts with special language requirements are from levels P-1 to P-5 inclusive.

C. Women in the General Service and related categories

13. The majority of women working in the United Nations system are in the General Service and related categories. In fact, there are more than four times as many women in the General Service than in the Professional category. Promotion to the G-7 level is understandably limited by the pyramidal structure of grading, and a recent study undertaken by the Focal Point for Women on stagnation of staff at levels G-5/G-6 and G-7 indicates that only some 6 per cent of the total General Service staff population will reach the G-7 level to perform para-professional functions during an average career span of 25 years.

14. The G to P Competitive Examination has come to be regarded as the most objective avenue for promotion from the General Service to the Professional category. It is moreover significant that, as in the case of competitive examinations to fill posts with special language requirements, the removal of extraneous factors leads to a more gender-balanced representation.

15. Recent in-house studies have revealed issues of concern to women in the General Service and related categories which merit greater attention. These include such areas as training opportunities and career development. These concerns will receive particular attention in the context of the overall human resources management strategies proposed by the Office of Human Resources Management as well as in the strategic plan of action proposed in this report.

III. CONSTRAINTS AND SOME IMPROVEMENTS

A. Women in the Professional category: the glass ceiling

16. Constraints to the advancement of women are many, varied and well entrenched. Often subtle and difficult to pinpoint because they relate to the "social" environment, they create invisible walls that hamper the efforts to introduce change and make progress slow and difficult.

17. It is gratifying to note that such strategic measures as the issuance of the landmark administrative instruction ST/AI/382 in March 1993, on special measures to improve the status of women in the Secretariat, and concerted efforts to increase the pool of qualified women candidates at the middle levels have contributed to the sizeable gains in the P-4 and P-5 levels during 1992-1994. The impact of a growing pool of P-5 women staff members qualified to assume higher level duties has not yet translated into promotions of women to the D-1 level and above, in part because these women have not accumulated the required seniority. Such mechanisms as cumulative seniority and judicious use of accelerated promotions in particularly deserving cases as appropriate will be applied, to increase the representation of women at the senior and policy-making levels. OHRM will devote careful attention to maintaining the pool of P-5 women candidates and to providing training as needed for their further career development. The strategic plan of action presented in this report includes strategies to facilitate the promotion of women to levels D-1 and above. These have been formulated bearing in mind the constraints listed below, which have been identified within the Secretariat.

1. Years in grade

18. A study of women in a single grade for 10 years or longer carried out by the Focal Point for Women indicates that many well-qualified women staff members remain in one grade for 10 years or longer. Enhanced planning capacity and career development will serve the interests of both the Organization and staff - men and women - in clarifying where and when opportunities for mobility and career advancement will arise. A management culture and management tools are being developed to recognize staff contributions to the Organization's work programmes as well as staff mobility and flexibility in adapting to a wider range of functions. Measures will be implemented to facilitate the advancement of this pool of qualified, senior women staff members, including to the extent possible considering their candidatures before looking externally for other women candidates.

2. Placement and promotion system

19. It is too early to assess the impact of the introduction of a new placement and promotion system in November 1993. The new system replaced the grade-by-grade annual promotion review with a system for announcing vacancies to which all interested persons could apply. While a comparative analysis of both systems would not be appropriate because of the different nature and cycles of the systems, a detailed analysis of the number of men and women recruited or promoted during the full year 1994 would indicate whether the new system offers greater opportunities to improve the status of women in the Secretariat.

20. As shown in table 3, preliminary figures indicate that more women than men have been promoted at levels P-2 through P-4, while more men than women have been promoted at the P-5 and D-1 levels. A total of 76 staff members, 54 per cent of whom are women, were promoted during the same period. As foreseen in the Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/267, entitled "Placement and promotion", of 15 November 1993, the new system will be reviewed, updated and refined by 1995 in the light of experience and the long-term needs of the Organization. Special attention will be given in the context of this review to determining how the system could better facilitate the promotion and recruitment of women.

Table 3. Percentage of women promoted through the appointment and promotion bodies (from January to June 1994)

Levels	Men	Women	Total	Percentage of women
D-1	5	2	7	28
P-5	9	5	14	36
P-4	10	12	22	54
P-3	11	16	27	59
P-2/P-1	0	6	6	100
Total	35	41	76	54

Source: Data provided by the secretariat of the appointment and promotion bodies.

3. Recruitment

21. Table 4 indicates the percentage of women recruited through the appointment and promotion bodies during the first half of 1994. The data reveal that a much higher percentage of women than men was recruited at levels P-1/P-2 and P-3, 67 and 71 per cent, with a significant drop to 12 and 20 per cent for women at the P-4 and P-5 levels, respectively. Recruitment at the D-1 level was equally divided between men and women candidates. Thus, while some gains have been achieved, efforts must be made to accelerate the recruitment of women at middle and senior management levels and to ensure the steady and deliberate application of recruitment policies geared towards achieving the representation targets set by the General Assembly. The multiple roles played by women and their varied experiences, including volunteer work, should be given greater weight in evaluating candidatures and the contributions they can make to the work of the Organization, particularly those women rejoining the work force.

Table 4. Percentage of women recruited through the appointment and promotion bodies (from January to June 1994)

Levels	Men	Women	Total	Percentage of women
D-1	1	1	2	50
P-5	4	1	5	20
P-4	15	2	17	12
P-3	6	15	21	71
P-2/P-1	1	2	3	67
Total	27	21	48	44

Source: Data provided by the secretariat of the appointment and promotion bodies.

4. Career progression

22. In line with the spirit of the overall strategy for the management of the Organization's human resources set out in document A/C.5/49/5, and the strategic plan of action for women, career development plans and career development will play a prominent role in facilitating the advancement of women in the Secretariat.

5. Access to qualified/experienced women

23. Women comprise on average a lower percentage of the applicants for senior management vacancies. The paucity of women applicants, combined with the relatively small pool of women in service, contributes greatly to frustrating the effort to increase the representation of women. The response of women candidates to vacancies in certain fields traditionally viewed as male-dominated and technical - such as engineering - yields an even lower percentage of applicants or none at all. It is a generally recognized fact that women qualified in diverse technical fields can be identified in the newly independent States and countries in transition, as well as in Asian, African and Latin American developing countries. Efforts are under way to reach them.

24. External and internal competitive examinations have opened an avenue to recruit and promote women. External examinations, in particular, yielded a significant increase in the number of women recruits from 31 per cent in 1985 to 51 per cent in 1992. From 1985 through 1993, in nine rounds of the internal G to P Competitive Examinations, 63 per cent of the 177 staff promoted were women. The expansion and publicity of these examinations, especially in unrepresented or underrepresented Member States in the case of external examinations, are

considered useful devices in targeting recruitment and promotion mechanisms to balance geographical and gender distribution. Accordingly, the Examinations and Tests Section of OHRM is publicizing the national competitive examinations through the mass media and encourages all qualified women to apply.

6. Mobility

25. The Secretary-General considers that greater mobility will not only better serve the Organization but will serve the interests of individual staff in terms of their careers, experience and job satisfaction. However, it should be borne in mind that mobility can be a double-edged sword for dual-career families and single-parent families, where primary care is generally entrusted to women. OHRM will revisit such issues as strengthening systems to facilitate spousal employment and flexible working hours.

B. Women in the General Service and related categories: the glass ceiling

26. It should be recalled that, while there is a general acceptance among women in the General Service and related categories that the G to P Competitive Examination is a means of advancement to the Professional category, the number of available posts is considerably smaller than the number of General Service staff seeking access to Professional status. The small number of posts at the entry level has served to frustrate those, including women, in the General Service category who cannot be placed because of a shortage of posts. The allocation of posts for internal examinations is 30 per cent; consideration is being given to the possibility of proposing an increase to 40 per cent.

27. The Focal Point for Women intends to conduct further research into the avenues which can be pursued to identify means of enhancing the job satisfaction of senior General Service staff. Consideration must be given to identifying other avenues in addition to the competitive examination process for qualified women at the G-6 and G-7 levels to obtain job satisfaction and recognition of their contributions to the Organization.

C. Sexual harassment

28. It is considered that the issuance on 29 October 1992 of two administrative instructions, ST/AI/379 entitled "Procedures for dealing with sexual harassment" and ST/IC/1992/67 entitled "Guidelines for promoting equal treatment of men and women in the Secretariat", has sensitized both men and women to such issues and may well have served as a deterrent to such behaviour. Efforts have to be made to dispel the perception that those reporting incidents of sexual harassment will be placed in a situation detrimental to their career development and relations within the work environment.

29. With this in mind, an integral aspect of training programmes for managers, staff going on mission assignment and others will be an emphasis on the equal treatment of men and women and on issues related to sexual harassment.

Moreover, the implementation of the system of accountability and responsibility and the new performance appraisal system should help to change the management culture of the Organization and render it more responsive also in this particular area.

IV. STRATEGIC PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE SECRETARIAT (1995-2000)

A. Introduction

30. Reflective of the Secretary-General's commitment to the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat is his intention to issue strict instructions to all departments, offices and organs of the Secretariat to adhere to the "succession plan for women", being devised as the centre-piece of the strategic plan of action for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat. The plan would give the Secretariat, for the first time, a planning capability and management tools to ensure that the 35 per cent overall target will be achieved by 1995, and the 25 per cent at levels D-1 and above as soon as possible and not later than June 1997.

31. The strategic plan of action, 1995-2000 (hereinafter called "the plan") is based on the Action Programme for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat (1991-1995) but updates it to reflect the human resources management strategies and policies proposed by the Secretary-General in documents A/49/527 and A/C.5/49/5. Taking into account the mandates and requests of the General Assembly, the plan will set viable objectives and goals attainable within the current and anticipated capacity of the Organization. The Secretary-General will ensure the implementation of the plan through the issuance of clear and specific instructions as to the authority and responsibility of all managers to implement it, and the criteria by which performance will be appraised.

B. Goals and objectives

32. The long-term goals of the plan are to create conditions of equality and opportunity for women to participate fully in the work of the Secretariat and to achieve complete parity by the year 2000.

33. The objectives of the plan are:

(a) To achieve the target of 35 per cent overall representation of women in posts subject to geographical distribution by 1995 through the identification and setting of appropriate rates of recruitment and promotion;

(b) To achieve the 25 per cent representation of women at the D-1 level and above as soon as possible and not later than June 1997 through setting appropriate rates of recruitment/promotion at these levels;

(c) To identify and adopt recruitment and promotion policies and procedures which support the Secretariat's efforts to reach the targets and objectives;

(d) To establish clear opportunities for career development and improved conditions of work for the female staff in posts with special language requirements and in the General Service and related categories;

(e) To formulate specific actions and identify viable means to facilitate the implementation of the plan.

34. A recent assessment undertaken by the Focal Point for Women in the Office of Human Resources Management shows that the target of 35 per cent overall will be achieved if the "succession plan for women" that is being drawn up for the strategic plan is strictly followed. The 25 per cent target at levels D-1 and above is expected to be achieved around 1997, if the rates of recruitment and promotion proposed by the succession plan are implemented at these levels.

35. The assessment was based on the rate of attrition and replacement of vacancies in the Secretariat in the past five years and projected the number of men and women on available geographical posts from 1995 to the year 2000. The assumption was that the trends in recruitment and attrition from the past five years will continue during the next five years and that no significant changes would take place in the number of posts subject to geographical distribution.

36. The results also indicated that the Secretariat must accelerate promotion and recruitment of women gradually to a rate of at least 50 per cent to achieve better gender balance by the year 2000. Accordingly, the plan incorporates the results of this study into a model which would be used to test a few scenarios for reaching gender balance and set new annual targets and succession planning.

37. The succession plan for women will develop recruitment and promotion models and attempt to predict their impact, over a five-year period, on the grading structure and gender balance of the Secretariat.

38. These models will:

(a) Estimate available vacancies by grade for levels P-1/P-2 to Under-Secretary-General for the years 1995-2000;

(b) Estimate the targeted number of recruitments and/or promotions of women to be attained in each grade for each of the years in the period 1995-2000, if the overall target is set at 50/50 per cent representation by the year 2000;

(c) Test the likely impact of several "what if" scenarios in the combination of promotion/recruitment actions balanced against anticipated attrition rates at each grade level and over the years of the plan;

(d) Select the scenario which will balance the aspirations of women on board with the role of recruitment in closing the wide gaps in the representation levels of men and women at the higher levels (D-1 and above). The selected scenario will be built on principles that foster equality in conditions of work and job opportunities, offer training opportunities and encourage mobility of staff so as to maintain a steady influx of junior Professional women at the P-1 to P-3 levels, build the pool of women in middle

grades at P-4 and P-5 levels, and close the gender gap at the senior, policy-making D-1 and D-2 levels;

(e) Synchronize vacancies with the requirements of departmental staffing needs;

(f) Tie the success of the plan to the initiatives and monitoring role of OHRM and the accountability of the departments.

C. Implementation

39. To effect change, planning and targeting must be coupled with commitment and strategic action in such areas as planning and information/database development, recruitment, placement and promotion monitoring, appraisal and follow-up. The endorsement of this approach by the General Assembly is essential to achieving success. The strategic actions to be undertaken are as follows:

(a) Planning and information/database development

Planning and the development of timely and accurate information and database resources are essential to establish a human resources management planning and career management capacity. The strategic plan of action for women could provide a model for a human resources plan for the Secretariat and will be integrated into the planning capability of OHRM when this is established.

(b) Networking with other databases on women

Every opportunity will be taken to network with regional and international databases, including those of the regional commissions, universities, research institutions, professional women's associations and Governments. Special attention will be devoted to rosters available in developing countries and regions.

(c) Upgrading the internal roster of women

OHRM will continue upgrading its roster capability, cross-referencing to reflect the diverse experiences of staff members and facilitate the identification of candidates eligible for placement in posts in various occupational groups.

(d) Broad advertising and communication

OHRM will endeavour to advertise widely in professional journals as well as newspapers and direct mailings tailored to the requirements of the post being advertised and/or to the targeted countries which are unrepresented or underrepresented by women and/or in terms of geographical distribution.

(e) Recruitment missions

To increase the Organization's access to qualified women, particularly in unrepresented or underrepresented countries, the work programme of the Focal Point for Women and the Recruitment and Placement Division will include strategically targeted recruitment missions. During 1994 and 1995, recruitment missions will be scheduled to coincide with regional preparatory meetings for the Fourth World Conference on Women, deemed to represent an ideal opportunity to widen the net for recruiting qualified women from all regions.

(f) Management culture

It is essential to develop a management culture which is supportive in both word and deed of measures to achieve equality between men and women in the workplace, empowering both and giving both the scope to contribute to the work of the Organization to their maximum potential. Such a culture will require the active concern and involvement of managers at all levels in the optimum development and management of their human resources capacity.

(g) Mobility

Greater inter-agency cooperation will be sought in facilitating spouse employment and efforts will also be undertaken to encourage Governments to permit spouse employment in their respective duty stations.

(h) In-service training

Field mission assignments serve as excellent opportunities for women to expand their fields of expertise and gain valuable experience and skills, often offering the possibility to serve at a higher level. Similar opportunities between offices away from Headquarters and Headquarters would serve experience-building. A planned rotation system would also ensure that a return to the respective duty station would avoid the creation of job insecurity or placement difficulties.

(i) Career development

Women especially need to be encouraged to look after and actively engage their supervisors in their career development. Managers need to be encouraged to demonstrate flexibility and interest in facilitating such efforts.

(j) Training

OHRM is preparing training packages designed to foster the desired changes in management culture, enhance awareness and ability to deal with gender discrimination and sexual harassment issues, and provide skills training. More women at the P-5 and D-1 levels will be included in management training programmes to encourage their participation in the change in management culture, by promoting better understanding among both women and

men of different leadership styles, exploring better means of working together, and creating a more responsive working environment for all.

(k) General Service and related categories

Within the context of the local recruitment of staff and through their assignment to peace-keeping, peacemaking and other field operations, mobility should continue to be afforded also to staff in the General Service and related categories. These assignments should be effected through a roster capability. Such measures would give all qualified and deserving staff the opportunity to gain experience, knowledge and expertise and, as shown in previous field missions, often offer the opportunity to perform functions at a higher level.

A roster capability with senior G-6 and G-7 women could also be established in certain fields, such as Personnel Management, Personnel Administration, Recruitment, Finance and Administration to allow for quick replacement of Professional staff going away on mission. This would permit on-the-job training at a higher level for those staff selected.

D. Monitoring, appraisal and follow-up

40. Monitoring, appraisal and follow-up are essential components of the plan and will be continuous. Monitoring will measure day-to-day activities against the short-term goals as well as such general and long-term objectives of the plan as the numerical targets and timetables, set under the succession plan for achieving equitable gender balance in posts subject to geographical distribution. Compliance with criteria established for the development of the management system will be monitored.

41. The various components of the plan will be developed as pilot projects fully compatible and integrated with such Secretariat-wide systems as the Integrated Management Information System, the accountability and responsibility system and the performance appraisal system. Progress will be evaluated against the stated objectives and goals and will be reported to the General Assembly on a regular basis. Revisions and follow-up action will be undertaken on the basis of experience gained and further guidance offered by the General Assembly.

42. The assignment of responsibilities and roles within the Secretariat to specific, identifiable organizational units and officials and the establishment of the performance appraisal system, which will also evaluate performance in this regard, are viewed as important means of strengthening the spirit of commitment to implementing the plan. Authority commensurate with the responsibility delegated will empower officials to take the actions required in achieving stated goals. Clear policies and the communication of these as well as decisions to all staff will enhance transparency in human resources management.

E. Focal Point for Women in the Secretariat

43. The Focal Point for Women will continue to work closely with the divisions of OHRM and advise the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management on ways of improving the placement, promotion and recruitment processes as well as strategies to improve the environment and working conditions of women.

44. The activities of the Focal Point for Women are currently financed from extrabudgetary resources. While specific proposals to fund these activities with regular budget resources will be included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997, the uncertainty as to the availability of future extrabudgetary funding casts a doubt as to the immediate future of the unit. As an interim solution, Member States are encouraged to provide voluntary contributions to strengthen the capacity of the Focal Point to carry out the strategic plan.

F. Member States

45. The Secretary-General will continue to urge Member States to include women among those lists of nationals proposed for vacancies and to assist in contacting and encouraging qualified women to apply for positions with the United Nations and to publicize vacancies. Material support is also being invited in the form of the non-reimbursable secondment or financing of experts to assist the Office of Human Resources Management, in particular the Focal Point for Women, in the conduct of goal-specific studies or activities.

46. The commitment and active support of Member States is also critical. The Secretary-General will continue to identify and draw to the attention of Member States the ways in which they can play a decisive role in achieving the goals and objectives set for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat.

V. CONCLUSION

47. As preparations progress for the Organization's fiftieth anniversary and the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, it is appropriate to recall that the Charter of the United Nations sets the foundation of the commitment to create conditions of equality and opportunity for women and men of the highest calibre. General Assembly resolutions 48/106 and 48/108 refer to the shared responsibility of the Member States and the Secretary-General in this regard, identifying the diverse and complementary roles of each. These as well as previous relevant resolutions entrust the Secretary-General with fulfilling specific mandates and achieving specific goals in improving the status of women in the Secretariat, in particular at decision-making levels. Guided by the resolutions, the Secretary-General has taken action to fulfil these mandated responsibilities to the extent possible. It is increasingly clear, however, that the full involvement of Member States as active partners is required, if the objectives and goals set by the General Assembly are to be met. Thus, the

strategic plan of action for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat outlined in the present report envisages courses of action to be pursued by the Secretary-General as well as ways in which Member States can actively support the Secretary-General in his efforts.